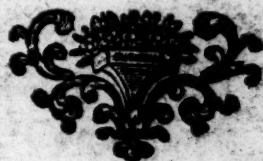


Goods Coffee House Sep^r. 21.

MODEST ADDRESS
TO THE
CLERGY
OF THE
CHURCH
OF
ENGLAND.

By a CLERGYMAN.

Οὐ δυνάμεθα γὰρ ἡμεῖς ἀ εἶδομεν καὶ ἡκούσαμεν, μὴ
λαλεῖν. ΠΡΑΞ. ΑΠΟΣΤ.



L O N D O N:

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MODEST ADDRESS, &c.

AT a Time, when general Addresses are deafning the royal Ear, that a national enquiry may be made into national Misconduct * ; at a Time when Uproar and Disorder grow big and violent, and the Hearts of many wax faint for the tottering condition of our Religion and Constitution ; at such a Time as this when the papal Banner is displayed in Triumph, and the Enemies of our Peace are advancing with hasty Steps ; let me Address myself to you, my Brethren and Companions of the Altar, you who are the bulwark of our Religion, you who are intrusted with the eternal Interests of Men, that you awake at this critical Juncture from your spiritual Lethargy, that ye be no longer

* The Author designed the Publication of this Address in *December* last, but was obliged to defer it.

allured by the blandishments of Sense, devoted to Grandeur and Ambition, but that Reformation and national Piety may revive and flourish again through your Endeavours and good Examples ; that the Arm of Providence may interpose at this Time to snatch this unthankful Nation from such imminent and deadly Danger.

Far be it from me to defame or discredit the sacred and most excellent Order of Men, the Ministers of Jesus Christ: I am one, my brethren, who had the honour to be early enlisted into the Service of the same great Master ; and I hope it will not be offensive to any of you, if it be done with Seriousness and Candour, to enquire at this critical Juncture, when national Depravity o'ertops all Bounds and Measures, how far the visible neglect of Pastoral Duty has been instrumental in letting in such a torrent of Immorality as must, without a speedy prevention, overwhelm and sink this Nation : Nor do I presume to lay this heavy Charge upon the Consciences of the Clergy in general ; no, my Brethren, I speak it with transport,

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I am persuaded better Things of you, the exemplary and laudable Endeavours of many, the truly pious and charitable Labours of others, in turning the Hearts of the disobedient to the Obedience of the Gospel, have, I doubt not, been highly serviceable in averting the Judgments of God, and have been, as it were, a grateful sacrifice, to stop that lingring vengeance which has so often threatned the Ruin and Destruction of this Kingdom; yet it is to be greatly feared too, that the inconsiderateness of some amongst us, the inactivity and dislike of others to do good in their ministerial Offices have been deadly baneful to the Cause of Virtue, and have poisoned the wholsom and salutary precepts of the Christian Institution.

We are blest with the purest Religion that was ever vouchsafed to the Sons of Men, a Religion that is decent and reasonable in all its Parts, and if our Hearts and Minds were but half as firm and pure, what Prosperity and Happiness might we not expect? If Zeal and Union for the love of God and our Religion could but once
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take root and flourish, we might become like *Sion* of old never to be moved: our *Jerusalem* would then be so compact together, as to become strong and impregnable; but I know not from whence should arise such a Spirit of infatuation that we will not behold the things which belong to our Peace: But thus it is, Men are heaping up Misery for themselves, and mad in procuring their own Destruction. Our intestine Feuds and Factions, malevolent and bitter Bickerings, are now, as they were formerly to the *Jewish* Nation, more destructive and hurtful to the Peace and Safety of the Kingdom, than the united Force and Power of our Enemies; and could the Shade of *Titus* rise up amongst us at this Hour, would there not be occasion again for Tears, to see the torn and miserable condition of a profligate divided People?

I find I have deviated a little from my principal Design, and have been led by the seriousness of the Subject to a long digression, but I shall recollect myself again, and turn unto you, my Brethren,

Brethren, to exhort and beseech the remiss and negligent in their several Stewardships and Vocations, to consider the importance of their sacred Function, and to beg of Men to be reconciled to God. For if we who were hired at so great a Price, the promise of unspeakable happiness, should be found at the last great Day, to have done no Work in the Vineyard, but have been all the Day idle, how miserable will be our Condition? for the degrees of our Happiness in a future State, will certainly be in proportion to the degrees of our diligence and industry here in serving God and promoting the Happiness of others.

It shall be my Business in the remaining Part of this short Work, to enquire from what evil Springs do arise such streams of Bitterness, what Reasons or Causes can be assigned for such a general decay of Piety, such a visible Apostacy from moral Goodness, and I shall endeavour to point out some useful and profitable Means, by the Practice of which, united to the divine Assistance, we may heal our civil diseases and bind
up

up the Wounds of Religion : And if in the Prosecution of these Enquiries any of you, my Brethren, should be offended, let it be remembred, that no Spite or Bitterness is design'd against the Persons of any ; but it is time for Men to speak out, it is time to put a stop to this national Infection, and therefore, for the sake of *Sion I will not hold my Peace, for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep Silence.*

There are some (would to God it was not so common) who invested with the character of Ministers, Ambassadors for Christ, and co-workers with him, who forgetting the Business of their Calling, and the Example of their Master, whose constant Employment it was to do good to the Souls of Men, do shamefully desert his Service and are Enemies of the Cross of Christ, Men of dissolute Lives and Conversations, *lovers of Pleasure more than lovers of God*, who like the Shepherds of *Israel*, the Prophet *Ezekiel* mentions, do feed themselves : But *wo to the Shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves ; should not the Shepherds feed the Flock ? The dis-*

eased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither had ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost, but with Force and Cruelty have ye ruled them; wherefore I am against the Shepherds, saith the Lord.

And it is no Wonder God should be displeased with those, by whose loose and irregular Lives, supine Negligence and cruel Treatment, the Souls of those committed to their Charge are permitted to live in Ignorance and Sin, and to be lost and perished for ever: but whoever thou art, intrusted with so great a Commission, consider thyself and others: it should be thy constant and daily Exercise to administer to the Wants of Men; begin then this necessary Work, *for the Night may suddenly come upon thee, when thou mayst not be permitted to Work.*

What if some of those idle and unprofitable Hours which are spent in a round of Visits, or it may be in the immoderate pursuit of field Amusements, were to be more charitably employed in

the great Work of the Ministry? Think not thou hast allotted enough of thy Time for serious Duties; because thou art one Day in seven employed in the great Work of Salvation: Thou hast a thousand Opportunities every Day to do Good: Instruct the Ignorant by good and seasonable Admonition, reclaim the Stubborn and Disobedient by gentle and kind Reproof, visit the Sick and drooping Spirit; comfort and exhilarate the doubting and unsettled Temper; oppose the Superstition and Bigotry of *Rome*; soften our religious Differences and vindicate the Protestant Religion: O that there were such a Heart and Mind in the Ministers of the true Religion! then would the *Protestant* Religion, once the Admiration of the World and scourge of *Rome*, now faded and changed from its primitive Lustre by the prevalence of *Atheism* and the Insolencies of Popery, lift up its Head again, and surmount every Opposition: The precepts and good Instructions of the truly virtuous are extremely persuasive, and whoever teaches by the Example of his
own

own good Life, does certainly teach to the best Purpose, but whoever he is who lives a vicious and profligate Life, tho' he had the Tongue of Angels and understood all Mysteries and had all Knowledge, yet never could he be of service to promote Religion: No Man would ever receive the Counsel he offers, when he is convinced by his irregular Behaviour that he himself does not regard it: Our Wickedness is arrived at its full Maturity, all Orders and Ranks of Men have caught the Contagion, this is thy Triumph, O Immorality! no wonder then Men are lewd and factious, contentious and disturbers of the public Tranquillity, no wonder Men are false and treacherous, base and cowardly, corrupt and insolent, when the Fear of God is cast behind them, and Men are become abominable in their doings.

Upon you ye Magistrates of the Realm, ye who are the Ministers of God too for the public Safety our Continuance as a Nation greatly depends, exert then at this critical Juncture your utmost Power to stand up against the Workers

of Iniquity, contribute by your Zeal and good Examples to the maintainance of the true Religion and the suppressing of Vice and Immorality. But as no Order or Set of Men is so peculiarly adapted for this necessary and useful Work of Reformation, no Men who have such powerful Means and Opportunities to be serviceable for this great End, as you my Brethren of the holy Function; to you I shall address myself again, and shall point out some visible Neglects in the imperfect Discharge of your ministerial Duties, which I fear have been highly injurious to the Credit and Reputation of the reformed Religion—

It must hurt the Peace of every sober Christian to see the deplorable abuse of public Worship: God has appointed but one Day in seven for the exercise of religious Duties, and an Hour or two is the most of our Time required for this necessary Performance; yet as if it was but a small Thing to dishonour God, how hardly are some persuaded to consecrate even this pittance of Time for the Service of God and their own Happiness?

Amazing!

Amazing ! That Creatures who every Day experience so many singular Blessings from Providence, should be guilty of such foul Ingratitude ; the very Heathens themselves will rise up in Judgment against us, and be our Accusers : For no Nation or Age of the World did ever yet behold such complicated Scenes of Wickedness and Folly as are in some Places exhibited upon the Christian Sabbath. Were we to introduce a Heathen into some of our Religious Assemblies ; to see such a mixt Behaviour, of People talking, laughing, sleeping, and some few praying, would he not conclude it a Place for Merriment or an Exchange for Business ? For such a medley of Behaviour is sometimes seen in the Time of divine Worship as the most brutish Idolaters would blush to behold ; insomuch that the very worshipping of *Mercury* by throwing Stones, or *Hercules* by cursing, was almost as decent and sober a Custom.

But we above all Men, my Brethren, must not be astonished at such brutal Indecencies ; we have largely, I fear, contributed

tributed hereto by neglecting the Morals of Youth, and leaving them unacquainted with the fundamentals of Religion : The Catechism our Church has appointed is an excellent summary of christian Doctrine, and our Canon requires it to be constantly used every Sabbath, but how far this is complied with I need not mention : Now if some pains had been used to explain the Catechism, and to instruct Children in the Principles of their Religion, we never had been so infested and over-run with Error or Superstition, nor would so many of the common People have revolted from the reformed Religion to the Corruptions and Superstition of *Rome* : If early Piety and Virtue were planted in the Minds of Youth they would thrive and flourish exceedingly, but if Thorns and Briars are permitted to arise and choke these tender Plants through the neglect of a careless Husbandman, he will one Day be severely accountable for this sad Mismanagement : If no pains are taken (which is too much the Case) to instill into Children the Fundamentals of Religion

ligion they will afterwards grow cool and indifferent about it as they grow up to Manhood; they are then too wise for Instruction, and too aukward to begin to learn; so that the want of early Tuition is the foundation of their future Misery: They cannot then be persuaded to partake of the blessed Sacrament, because they are ignorant, they pretend, of its Nature and Design, tho' God has made the neglect of this positive Duty as incompatible with Salvation as the neglect of any one Commandment; thus ignorant of their christian Duties for want of early Instruction they become an easy Prey to Seducers, or take Shelter in Infidelity, casting off every Ordinance of God, and living as without God in the World.

That this is the sad Condition of Numbers, too much Experience convinces; and one would think the Ministers of the Gospel were born of Rocks and equalled the Brutes in Cruelty, if they can behold with indifference such Myriads sinking in Misery and not stretch out their Hands to save them: I do not
say

say the Clergy can force Men to be Good and Virtuous; this we know is altogether impracticable, but then much might be done by frequent Instruction, by Persuasion, and by good Examples; *If our Light was to shine before Men that they might see our good Works*, it is charitably to be presumed they would strive to imitate; but if *blinded through the deceitfulness of Sin*, they are permitted to wander in the wide Paths of Error and Ignorance, no wonder they are lost and bewildered—Give me leave to put a Case to any of you, my Brethren; Suppose some powerful Patron was to solicit your Vote and Interest with your Parishioners to support his Election, and was to back the Petition with a Promise of a hearty Living, which of you in this Case would be remiss and negligent? Would ye not closely apply to every Voter? And suppose some unreasonable Excuses were urged by some for their not complying; I doubt not but ye would use your utmost Rhetoric and try every plausible Argument to remove such idle Excuses: Now if the
same

same Endeavours were used to bring Men to the public Worship of God, and to be Partakers of the holy Communion, I doubt not but they would have a powerful Influence upon the Minds of many ; for I cannot suppose Men to be so obstinately bent upon future Misery as to prefer it to a state of Happiness.

And supposing it should cost us a little Labour and Trouble to do this it would soon be over, but the Comforts arising from such laudable Endeavours will remain with us for the rest of our Lives ; nor shall we lose our Reward at the great Day, when those *who have converted many to Righteousness will shine as the Stars in Heaven*. What if some useful Books, which are to be purchased at an easy Price, were to be distributed as Occasion serves to the Poor and Indigent ? And some of our vacant Hours (for many we must own we have) set apart and allotted to explain and expound them : And if Men will not be

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persuaded

persuaded after such hearty Endeavours as these to be punctual at their Devotions, we must have recourse, as the Canon directs, to the civil Power, and this perhaps might be very Instrumental in bringing Men to the Obedience of the Gospel: Were we to take up that noble Resolution of the Royal Psalmist, *to behave ourselves wisely in a perfect way, and to walk in our houses with a perfect heart*, this would be a means to revive again what is almost expiring in this profligate Age, family Religion; and it would highly redound to the honor of the established Clergy, to be more exemplary to their Families in serving God, and unblameable in their Conversations.

We may be displeased, if we will, at the Abilities of Men in Power, and may fret at the Misconduct of those who were employed to fight our Battles; the unprosperous Success of our Arms, united to our civil Diffensions, may reasonably disturb our Peace, and
make

make us uneasy ; but if we will seriously enquire into the Causes and Nature of Things, we shall find that a want of Religion and moral Virtue are the true and principal Causes of our present Disorders : for if our Lives and Properties, our Liberties, and, what more valuable yet, our excellent Religion, are to be defended by a set of Men, who, instead of being more religious than others, as they are more eminently exposed to Danger, are nevertheless more profligate and abandoned, little I fear is to be expected from our Fleets and Armies ; for it is confirmed to us from the Experience of *Solomon*, that the Wicked will flee when no Man pursueth, but the Righteous is bold as a Lion. The wise Man does not assert from this Place, that every wicked Man is a Coward, or that every good and religious Man is as bold as a Lion ; his Meaning is plain and obvious ; That wickedness naturally tends to dishearten and make men Cowards, but Righteousness excitheth to Valour ; and the Truth of this

is evident, for the wicked must be more than a Soldier who dares to defy the God of Armies ; or can hazard his life with indifference, when he knows if he falls in Battle he is lost and undone for ever : But this is not the case of the Righteous ; he is firm and unshaken in the midst of Danger, secure in his own Integrity ; the instruments of War that are dealing Death around him turn his Thoughts upon God and his Protection ; if he lives he is comforted by the Applause of an honest Conscience, and if he falls he is happy for ever : so that we see Wickedness and Immorality naturally tend to make Men Cowards, and not only deprives them of the divine Protection, but disqualifies them also for the Service of their Country.

A small Acquaintance with History, particularly that of the *Jewish* Nation, will sufficiently teach us, that the Prosperity or Misery of a Nation depends upon national Behaviour ; when the *Jews* were constant and hearty in the
worship

worship of the true God, and served him in Truth and Sincerity, they miraculously prevailed and prospered ; but when they broke off from the service of God, and became idolatrous and deadly wicked, no Nation ever experienced more fatal Calamities : and how long it will please God to defend us, who are more than *Jews* in Iniquity, from the Hands of our Enemies, we cannot tell ; but except some immediate stop be put to that prodigious Impiety which every where prevails, we may soon bid a lasting Farewel to every thing that is dear and valuable ; but we have yet Time and Opportunity, my Brethren, to consider and amend our Lives, and by reforming ourselves to promote the Reformation of others : If we have hitherto neglected the Work of the Ministry let us now make amends by exerting a double Diligence. If we will not defend our Religion with as much Warmth and Zeal as the Enemies of our Peace exert to undermine and ruin it, it will one Day

Day be irrecoverably lost and taken from us : Be ye therefore *instant in Season, out of Season, reprove, rebuke, exhort ; stand fast in one Spirit, with one Mind, in Love and Unity striving together for the Faith of the Gospel.* Let us seriously consider the Importance of our Office, and the valuable Treasure committed to our Charge ; they are the Sheep of Christ whom he bought by his Death, and for whom he was contented to be betrayed and crucified. Let us therefore take care of the Flock, *not by constraint but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready Mind, and when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a Crown that fadeth not away.*

It is time for us to call upon those who are intrusted to our Care, to beg of God in this time of Danger to go forth with our Fleets and Armies ; it is time for us to awaken every one who is remiss and negligent, as the Mariner did *Jonah* in that dreadful Storm, saying, *what meanest thou, O Sleeper ? Arise, call upon*

upon thy God. If so be God will think upon us, that we perish not. Thus if we will turn unto God by a general Repentance, God may be intreated to spare us, and to continue us still a free and happy People ; but if we will still do wickedly, we shall be consumed, both we and our King.

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